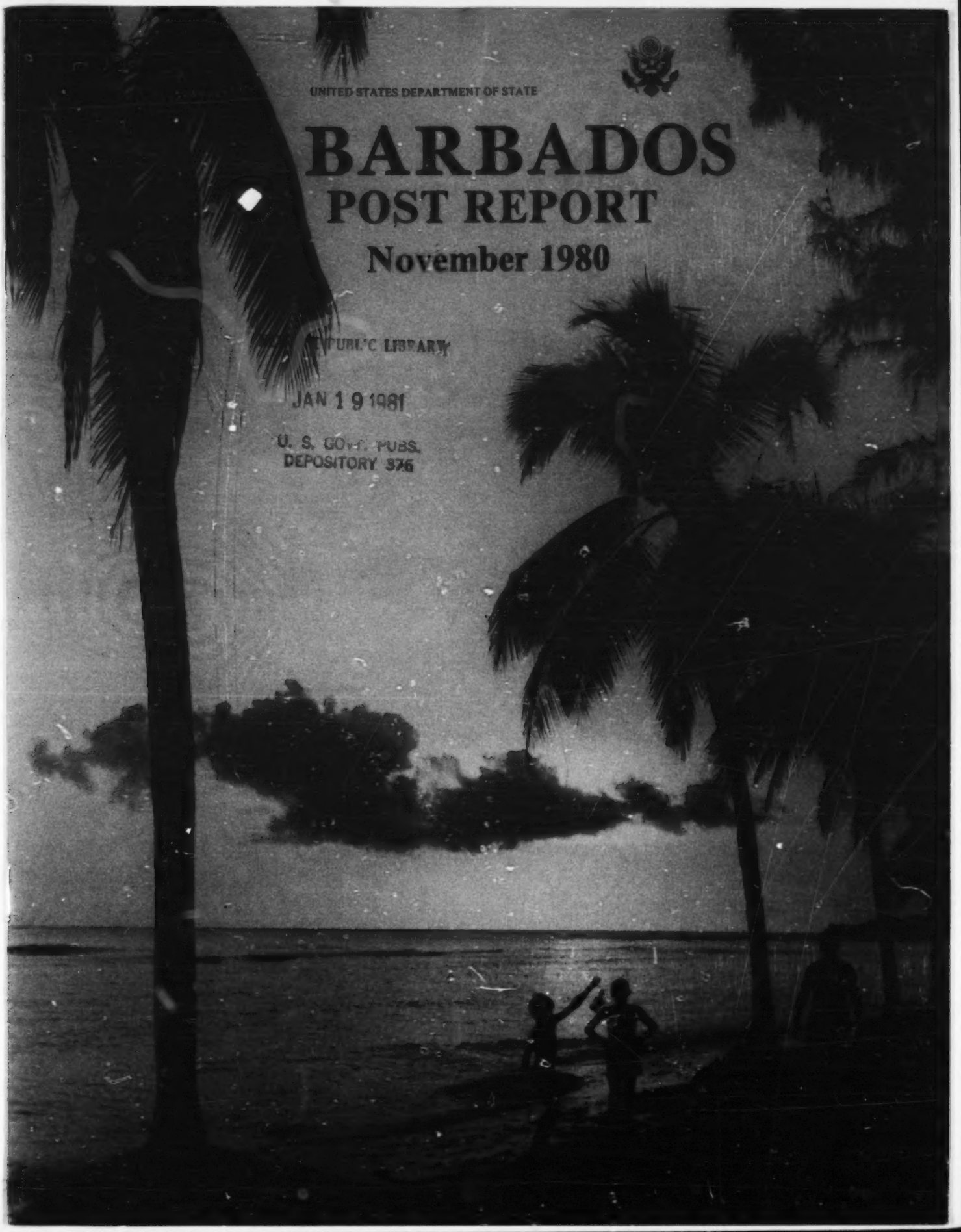

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BARBADOS
POST REPORT
November 1980

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PREFACE

Barbados, a renowned tourist mecca, is in many ways the most advanced of all the eastern Caribbean Islands. While Barbados enjoys some advantages that other nearby islands do not enjoy, nevertheless, the foreigner coming to Barbados still has to make some adjustments in lifestyle.

The sun shines nearly every day; the sea and good beaches are always near, and Barbadians are well disposed toward Americans. The island, however, is small and somewhat isolated, and the climate is tropical and humid. There are few cultural amenities, and many goods and services are available only at high prices, if at all. Bridgetown can be a lonely post for a single person, but those who enjoy water sports, tennis, golf, horseback riding, and other sports in a mild climate should enjoy tours here.

This is the official post report prepared by the post. The information contained herein is directed to official US Government employees and their families. Any other information concerning the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATION 9156
Department and Foreign Service Series 210
Foreign Affairs Information Management Center
Publishing Services Division

Revised November 1980

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

SN 044-000-01825-0

Cover: Hastings Beach

The Host Country

AREA, GEOGRAPHY, AND CLIMATE

Barbados is one of the numerous islands of the eastern Caribbean. Located about 350 miles north of Guyana and 500 miles southeast of Puerto Rico, it has a land area of 166 square miles and is 21 miles long and 14 miles wide. Trade winds temper the heat to be expected from its position—less than 14° N of the Equator. It enjoys a healthful climate. Temperatures vary little throughout the year, or between day and night. In winter, temperatures may fall to 65°F at night; in summer, they may rise to the upper 80s during the day. The hottest and most humid months are June to October. Rainfall averages almost 60 inches a year, but some parts of the island are drier than others. It is a rare day when the forecast is not "mainly fair."

Barbados is of coral origin and mostly flat, although numerous rolling hills afford scenic overlooks of the ocean, seacoasts, and sugarcane fields. It is a slow-paced island of sugar plantations, narrow roads, and a few donkey-drawn carts and lovely white, sandy beaches. Swimming can be dangerous due to heavy surf, undertow, or coral rock formations on the east and southeast coasts, but the south and west coast beaches have less surf and are generally safe.

Lying outside the normal hurricane path, Barbados last experienced heavy damage from high winds in September 1955. No dangerous wild animals or snakes exist. Rabies is virtually unknown in Barbados, and a very strict quarantine regulation is in effect. On some other islands rabies is carried by mongooses. Flies, mosquitoes, ants, termites, and cockroaches are prevalent but normally can be controlled by local exterminators. Centipedes found on the island can give a painful bite. Manchineel trees lining many beaches bear a poisonous fruit, similar to a crab apple, and should be avoided, especially during a rainstorm, since they emit an irritant juice likely to cause skin eruptions.

POPULATION

In the distant past, Barbados was populated by Arawak Indians, but raids on their settlements by the fierce Carib Indians had a devastating effect. By the time the first English ship reached Barbados in 1625, the Arawaks had disappeared and the island was uninhabited. In 1627 the English began to settle the island and some years later to cultivate sugar. The English brought in African slaves to work the sugar, cotton, and tobacco plantations that were established. Blacks, therefore, have made up the majority of the Barbadian population over the last three centuries.

Barbados estimated population is 254,886, of which 90% is of African origin, 6% of mixed race, and 4% white and other. Bridgetown, the capital, chief port, and only real city, has a population of about 104,000. The overall population density is 1,535 people per square mile—one of the highest in the world.

Barbadians are a friendly, relaxed, and informal people, most of whom are well disposed toward Americans and either have visited the US themselves or have relatives or friends who live there.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Barbados is an independent and sovereign state within the Commonwealth, having acquired that status by mutual agreement of the Barbadian and British Governments on November 30, 1966. A Parliament has flourished since 1639, but the majority of the population was long disenfranchised, even after emancipation of the slaves in the 1830s. The island remained under oligarchic rule until 1946, when political changes resulted in introducing an embryonic Cabinet. In 1950, all persons 21 years of age or over acquired the vote; and in 1951, the first election under full adult suffrage took place. Barbados gained full internal self-government in 1961 and reduced the voting age to 18 in 1973.

Under its present constitution, Barbados is a parliamentary democracy of the Westminster type. The titular Head of State is the Queen of England, who appoints a Governor General to represent her in Barbados. The bicameral Parliament is supreme, however, consisting of an appointive Senate and an elected House of Assembly. The Prime Minister and other Cabinet members are appointed from among the House members; the Prime Minister is normally leader of the political party holding the majority of the seats in the House. The Senate consists of 21 members; the House 24. All Senators are appointed by the Governor General: 7 at his/her discretion to represent religious, economic, social or other interests; 12 on the advice of the Prime Minister; and 2 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

The judiciary comprises the Supreme Court of Barbados and a number of courts of summary jurisdiction. The Supreme Court consists of a Court of Appeal and a High Court.

Two parties dominate Barbados politics—the Barbados Labor Party (BLP) currently in power, and the official opposition, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), which held office from 1961 to September 1976.

ARTS, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION

The educational system was long geared to prepare administrative and clerical personnel as well as a limited number of university entrants. However, this pattern has changed in recent years. Much progress has been made in certain branches of technical training, especially manufacturing and engineering services, and in the hotel and catering trades.

The Government of Barbados operates primary schools, secondary comprehensive schools and through grants, aids some private schools, all of which offer regular academic subjects such as English, mathematics, languages, science, history, and geography. The Cave Hill Campus of the regional University of the West Indies (UWI) has faculties of law, arts and general studies, and social sciences. Other UWI faculties are located at the Jamaica and Trinidad campuses. The Barbados Community College offers junior college-level courses in commercial and engineering subjects and liberal arts. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Institute concentrates on vocational and technical education. Erdiston College conducts a 2-year teacher training course. Codrington College is an Anglican seminary dating back to the early 1800s.

The Barbados Arts Council periodically sponsors musical events, stage productions, and art exhibits. You can buy a wide variety of local art. Private instruction in art and music is possible. Several teachers are available in ballet and modern dance for adults and children.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The island is 85% arable. Its economy traditionally has depended on sugarcane, the chief crop. Sugar export, with its byproducts, rum and molasses, earns about 50% of the island's foreign exchange income from trade. In recent years tourism has become Barbados' main foreign exchange earner. Another important source of foreign exchange is emigrant remittances.

Barbados produces some consumer items, but most food, heavy machinery, and consumer goods are imported from the UK, US, and Canada. Most imports come from Canada and the US. Trade with the other island members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is not large but is growing.

The Barbados Government's development plans are designed to achieve industrial and social development and to encourage private initiative and investment. Foreign private investment is actively sought through the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation.

TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles

The only practical way to get around the island and to work and do personal errands is by private car or motorcycle. Embassy personnel may import one automobile duty free and/or purchase one locally without paying duty. A variety of makes are sold, starting at prices of about US$3,600. Before a car can be resold duty free, however, you must obtain permission from the government. Such permission usually is given when your transfer is imminent, but in principle the car is required to have been in the country or in your possession for 3 years.

Barbadian law requires that all vehicles carry third-party liability: BDS$10,000 property damage and unlimited personal liability. The Embassy Administrative Section will insure that this provision of law is complied with when the vehicle is imported or purchased and also that all vehicles are properly registered and licensed. The Embassy will also arrange for drivers licenses after you arrive. You do not have to take a driving test if you have a valid US (or other foreign) drivers license. Only persons 17 years of age or older may obtain a drivers license under local law.

To avail yourself of the lowest possible auto insurance premiums, bring "no-claim certificates" from your present carrier indicating that you have made no claims during the preceeding year or longer. Without this certificate, insurance rates will be 25%–45% higher.

Barbados has an extensive road network—800 miles of road, of which 720 miles are paved—but the roads are narrow and indifferently maintained. Traffic moves on the left, although regulations permit automobiles with left-hand drive. Few of the roads have sidewalks, and pedestrians, along with bicycles and horse carts, congest the roadways. Parts and service for American cars are hard to find. Most English and Japanese makes, however, and some major European manufacturers, have service facilities. You may purchase tax-free gasoline at two locations.

Local

Public bus service covers nearly all the island and is inexpensive, but buses are overcrowded during rush hours and on Saturday when people go to market. Taxis are available in Bridgetown and other population centers and at most hotels. Taxi fares are too high for you to use regularly.

Transportation to and from school for school-aged children is a problem because there is no schoolbus system as in the US. Older children living near a public bus route may find it convenient to take the bus. Otherwise, parents will have to drive their children to school or make arrangements with a privately owned van or taxi.

Regional

Eastern, American, and other major airlines operate between Barbados and many cities in North America and Europe. Regularly scheduled air service within the Caribbean is offered by BWIA, LIAT, and a host of small charter planes. Travel between the islands is unreliable and time-consuming.

Booth Line, Atlantic Lines, and other lines provide regular cargo service between New York and Barbados. In addition, local motor vessels and auxiliary schooners offer irregular but frequent communication between Barbados and the Leeward and Windward Islands and Guyana.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone and Telegraph

Phone service is available on most of the island. Overseas calls can be made through the operator 24 hours daily. Monthly telephone rental is about US$10. A 3-minute person-to-person call to Washington, DC costs about US$11; residence-to-residence and telephone calls placed after 6 pm are at reduced rates. A 10% surcharge is imposed on all long-distance calls placed from a private residence. Telegraph service to the US is excellent.

Mail and Pouch

Letters and parcels may be sent by pouch or through the Naval facility in Antigua under the following address: Box B, American Embassy, Bridgetown, FPO Miami 34054. However, the FPO and pouch are slow, and most Embassy personnel use standard international air

mail. The international mail address is: American Embassy, P.O. Box 302, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies.

Radio and TV

Radio Barbados (AM and FM same broadcast) is the only local radio station, but Barbados Rediffusion Service Ltd. operates a wired closed-circuit network. Both provide daily coverage of local news, as well as retransmitting British and Canadian Broadcasting Corporations reports on world events. You can rent Rediffusion speakers for a nominal charge.

The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) initiated regular color TV service in 1971, and most of its programs are now in color. CBC-TV operates one channel. Programing is a mixture of older American and British serials, locally produced news, and information and entertainment shows. US sets normally operate satisfactorily without adjustment with an indoor antenna.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The *Advocate-News*, the daily newspaper, and the twice-weekly *Nation*, both published in Barbados, are available throughout the island. Both concentrate heavily on local news, providing only a limited and concise coverage of international news. Home delivery is available. The *New York Times* (Sunday edition) is available, 2 or 3 days late, at a local bookstore but is expensive.

You can purchase some popular US magazines at local bookstores and newsstands. International editions of US news magazines are available locally, though Embassy staff members find it convenient to subscribe to the leading US news magazines.

At the Embassy you will have easy access to Barbados' public library system and will find that the central library has a good collection. Paperbacks and hardbound books, though not always recent publications, are available at several bookstores. The selection in paperbacks is good.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Medical Facilities

Fair medical and surgical services, including obstetrical care, are available. Two hospitals provide service comparable to that in many smaller US hospitals. Serious illnesses or complicated surgery should be attended to in the US. Local doctors are competent to take care of children's ailments.

Several good oculists and opticians can fill most prescriptions locally. Local pharmacists will not fill prescriptions made out by a US physician. This usually means that you must pay for a consultation with a local physician, who will write the prescription after an examination. Many drugs are not available locally. General dental services, dental surgery, and orthodontic services are good.

It is wise to find a personal physician as soon as possible after you arrive to avoid the possibility of long and uncomfortable delays at the hospital emergency section.

The Embassy operates a small Health Room for employees and dependents. This limited facility is staffed by a nurse and is open three times a week: Monday and Wednesday—11 am to 1 pm; Friday—2:30 to 4:30 pm.

Community Health

The general sanitation level is below US standards. Open drains exist, and garbage collection is sometimes erratic. Government sanitary inspectors check homes and factories to control flies and mosquitoes.

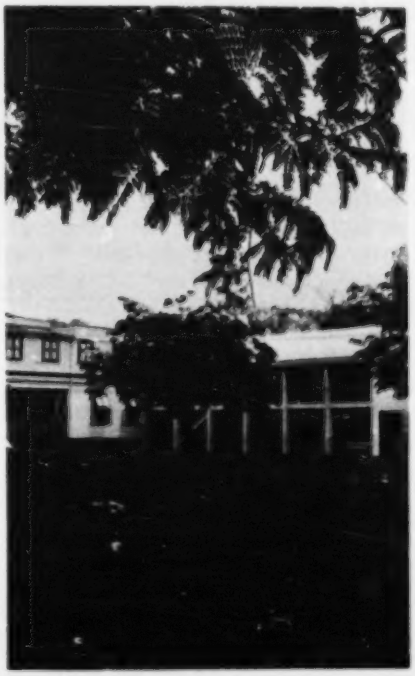
Soon after you arrive you may be subject to minor gastrointestinal disturbances; these are not serious and are easily overcome. Hay fever, asthma, sinusitis, or other respiratory diseases and allergy problems, which may be minor in temperate climates, can be aggravated here.

Preventive Measures

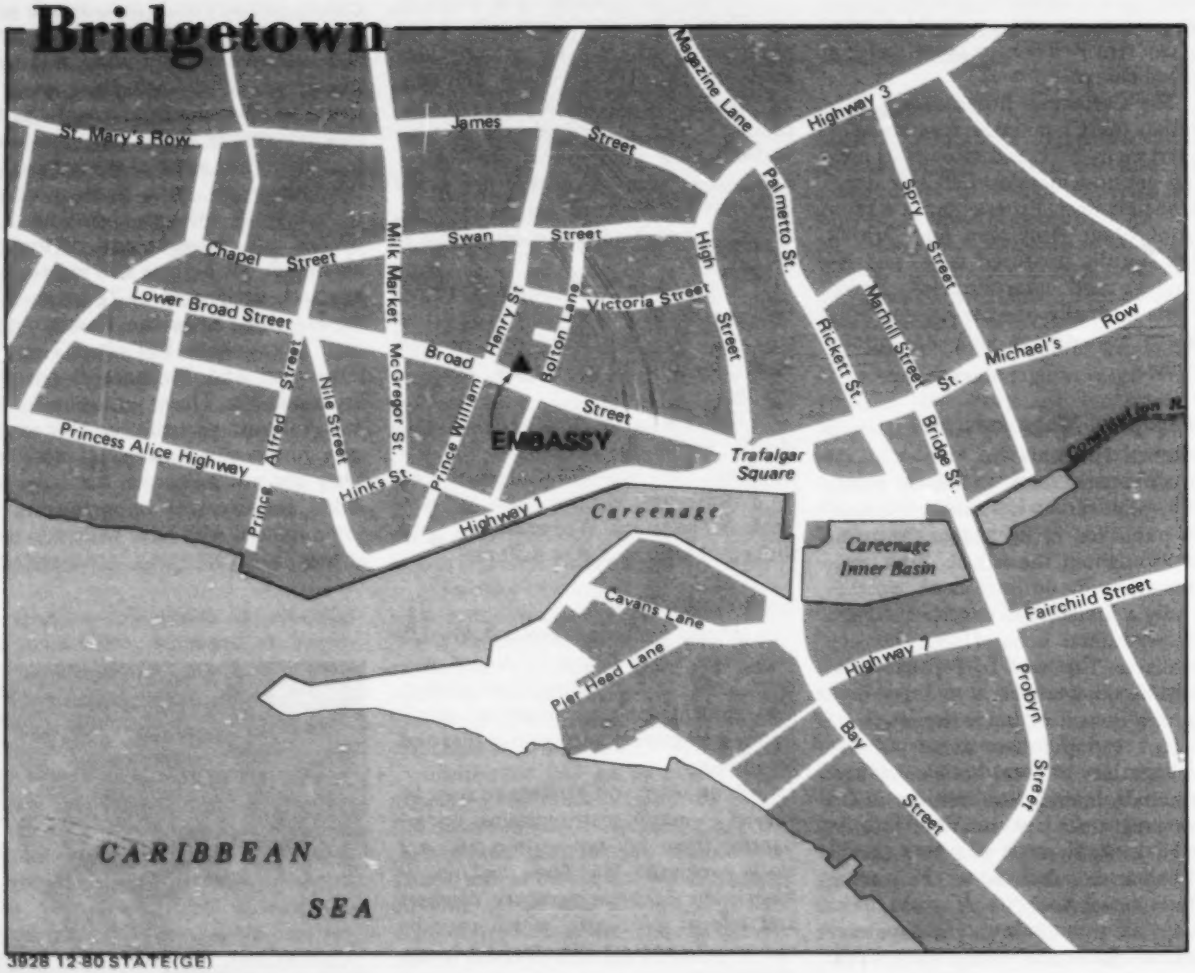
The island's water supply is good and does not have to be boiled. Filtering may be desirable due to a heavy lime content in the water. If you are coming from the US, smallpox vaccinations are not required, but typhoid shots, tetanus boosters, and polio immunization are a wise precaution. Women of childbearing age should consult their physicians about measles immunization. Children should be inoculated for measles before they come. If you intend to travel in Latin America while stationed here, have a yellow fever vaccination.

EMPLOYMENT FOR SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS

To date, the opportunities for spouses and dependent family members to work on the local economy have been virtually nonexistent. On rare occasions, when a qualified Barbadian cannot be found to fill a position, a work permit may be granted. In the past, these have been in limited areas of teaching and at the managerial level. Some positions with the US Mission, however, have opened up. Spouses and dependents may apply for all new and replacement positions designated as "Foreign Service National/American Family Member." Occasionally PIT (Part Time, Intermittent, and Temporary) positions are available. These positions for the most part are part time and/or temporary but cover a range of activities. They are not numerous but have provided employment opportunities for some spouses who have wished to work at post.



St. Winifred's School



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American Embassy

BRIDGETOWN

Bridgetown was founded in 1629 and is the capital and largest city in Barbados with a population of 104,000, including its immediate suburbs. Downtown Bridgetown is a crowded and rather quaint conglomeration of old and new buildings containing shops and offices. Public buildings, Parliament, the Treasury building, and the Careenage border Trafalgar Square. In the Square's center stands a statue of Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson, who served in the West Indies for 6 years before his famous 1805 victory at Trafalgar. The Careenage is the inlet into Bridgetown from the sea and is spanned by the Chamberlain Bridge and the Charles Duncan O'Neale Bridge. Careening, the keeling of ships for cleaning and caulking, is still done today.

The waterside is thronged with cargo, donkey carts, sailors, tourists, and vendors with fruit and spiced drinks brewed from bark. Rush hour traffic is heavy to, from, and in Bridgetown.

THE POST AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

All Embassy personnel with consular titles are accredited in their consular capacity to the five independent countries of Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia and Dominica. In addition, the Ambassador is accredited as US Special Representative to the Associated States and the DCM as Deputy US Special Representative.

About 800,000 people live in the area—Barbados is more than twice as populous as any of the other nine territories. English is the official language everywhere, although a French patois is spoken widely in St. Lucia and Dominica (which are close to French-speaking Martinique and Guadeloupe) and in certain areas of Grenada and St. Vincent. The territories are linked in a variety of ways, but there is little popular disposition to merge individual islands into a common Caribbean or other regional political grouping.

The Chancery occupies the entire fourth floor of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Building on Broad Street. The AID offices are in the Gulf House directly across the street. The Consular Section and International Communication Agency offices are 2 blocks away on the second and third floors of the Trident House office building. The Peace Corps has its Barbados office a short distance from downtown Bridgetown.

Other US Government facilities in the area include the US Naval Facility on Antigua, a US Eastern Test Range Tracking Station on Antigua, and the Peace Corps suboffices on Antigua and St. Vincent.

HOUSING

Temporary Quarters

The Embassy arranges temporary housing for all new arrivals, normally in hotel rooms with kitchen facilities. During the high season between November and April, most hotels will only guarantee a room for strictly limited amounts of time. All the hotels are located some distance from downtown Bridgetown, but the Embassy will reimburse taxi fare to and from work for newcomers until their own cars arrive.

Permanent Housing

The Embassy owns two residences, one occupied by the Ambassador, the other by the DCM. The Ambassador's residence rests on a 2.3-acre plot, and consists of five air-conditioned bedrooms, five full baths, living room, music room, air-conditioned dining room, air-conditioned study, covered veranda, kitchen, and pantry. It also has one servants room and one guards locker room with two baths, a two-car garage, storage/laundry room, outdoor covered storage space, and a potting fernery house. The residence is fully furnished. The Ambassador would have to provide only such things as books, pictures, and knick-knacks.

The DCM's residence has four bedrooms, three- and one-half baths, living room, study, dining room, kitchen, large veranda, a one-car garage, laundry room, and two maids rooms. It was completely remodeled in 1971, and all bedrooms, study, dining room, and kitchen are air-conditioned. It is fully furnished; an incoming DCM need bring only such things as a TV, radio, record player, and books and pictures.

All other Embassy personnel, except for the Marine Security Guard Detachment, must find their own quarters. Adequate housing is expensive and often difficult to find during the winter season, when most available space is reserved for short-term rentals.

Suitable apartments are practically nonexistent. Fully or partially furnished houses are available and are adequate for most basic needs.

The most recent survey shows that allowances usually are adequate to cover rental costs. However, rising rents and large increases in utility rates frequently push total housing costs over the maximum allowance levels.

Furnishings

Employees of State, USICA, and NOAA are allowed full household effects shipments, because furniture is not provided, other than basic accessories and appliances. The Embassy provides a stove and refrigerator, a washer and dryer, an air-conditioner for each occupied bedroom, and fiber rugs. Drapery costs are reimburseable on the condition that you return the curtains to the Embassy at the end of your tour.

The furniture you import into Barbados should be suitable for the local climate. Because of the heat, overstuffed furniture, heavy wool rugs, and heavy draperies are unsuitable. Furniture made

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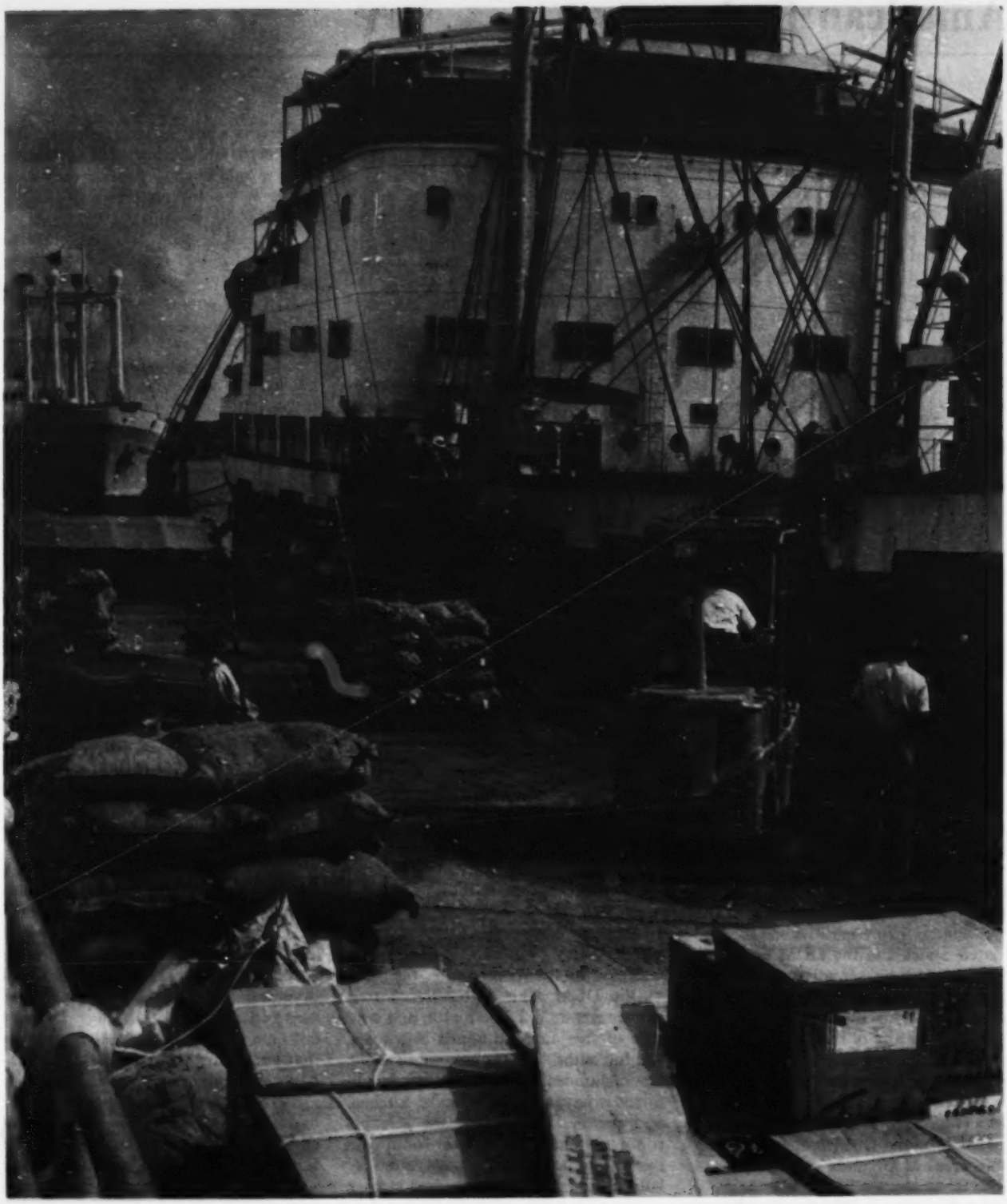


Bridgetown Port

of soft woods is also impractical because of termites. Some locally made wrought iron garden furniture is attractive and not exorbitantly priced. A rattan furniture factory produces good quality merchandise at comparable US prices or slightly above. Production time ranges from 3 to 6 months. Most other furniture made in Barbados is both more expensive and of lower quality than American-made items.

Utilities and Equipment

Electric current is 110v, AC, 50 cycles, but 220v current is also available if needed. Most houses have both two- and three-prong outlets. Appropriate plugs and adaptors are available locally. Clocks, tape recorders, and phonographs geared for 60 cycles will not operate properly unless modified for 50 cycles. Any other electrical equipment such as hair dryers, mixers, and blenders can be operated at 50 cycles but will run slightly slower. Irons, frying pans, and slow cookers with heating elements will operate equally well on 50 or 60 cycles.

There are delays in installing telephones. Gas is generally used for cooking and operating water heaters. Many newer houses have solar heating with an electric auxiliary heater for cloudy days. Bottled gas is used more widely than natural gas, but stoves are adaptable to either.

You may need to use air-conditioners not only for comfort but also to prevent mildew by keeping the humidity down and to close rooms off from insects and ash from cane burning. Electricity costs prevent constant use. Many houses are situated on hills, taking advantage of the almost constant easterly breeze, so some families can enjoy living with doors and windows open.

FOOD

Most meat sold locally is imported from Australia or New Zealand. This meat is of poor quality. You can obtain prime choice US beef from a local supplier, but it is expensive. Barbados depends almost entirely on fruit imports, although locally grown paw-paw (papaya), mangos, and avocados are available in season. String beans, carrots, cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, lettuce, parsley, eggplant, marrow, and squash are often available in limited quantity. Fresh fruits and vegetables are generally higher priced than in the US. Iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, normally air-freighted from Florida, are particularly expensive when available, as are seasonally imported items such as apples.

You may be disappointed to find that the quantity and variety of fish is limited. Flying fish, dolphin, redfish (snapper), and kingfish are the most common seafoods. Shrimp may sometimes be available frozen or, on a seasonal basis, fresh, but is expensive. Lobster in Barbados is scarce and extremely expensive. It is imported frozen, not fresh. A local delicacy called sea eggs (a sea urchin-like creature) has become scarce and is available mainly in season.

Staff employees can buy wine, beer, and liquor duty free.

Pasteurized milk is available and safe to drink, as is water from any tap on the island.

Embassy staff often bring lunches from home or buy sandwiches at downtown shops. Several suitable restaurants are nearby, but service is slow.

CLOTHING

Women. Simple cotton or cotton/synthetic dresses are suitable, whether working at the Embassy, at home, or running errands. Slacks and blouses are also acceptable. For social functions, long dresses, including sundresses and halter-type dresses, or blouses with long skirts, are favored, although shorter dresses may also be seen. Hats, gloves, and hose are worn only on special occasions and are unlikely to be needed by most women, except for ranking female officers or the wives of ranking male officers.

Men. Either shirt and tie (without jacket) is worn to the office or the locally available "shirt jac" (something like the guayabera in Latin America or the safari suit in Africa). Such attire is also acceptable for most social functions. Business suits, referred to locally as lounge suits, are worn on more formal occasions, but owing to the limited number of such events, two or three should suffice. Tuxedos rarely are worn and are unlikely to be needed by anyone but the Ambassador and DCM (black jacket is preferable to white). Tails and morning coats are not used.

Children. Clothing of the sort worn in the US during the summer is worn here. If they are young enough, they are unlikely to wear shirts, blouses, shoes, or socks while playing. For children at school, locally made uniforms are required.

Light-weight, informal clothing is worn by both men and women. It may be purchased locally. However, quality is often poor, except at the better and more expensive stores and boutiques. Prices are high. Many Embassy personnel use mail-order services in the US.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Supplies

Cigarettes, tobacco, cleaning supplies, paper products, and sundry drug supplies and cosmetics are available on the local market at higher prices than in the US. Hardware supplies, cooking utensils, linens, and chinaware and flatware are all available on the local market at reasonable prices.

Basic Services

Tailoring for men can be time consuming and not always of high quality. Dressmaking can be quite good with the right dressmaker—not so easy to find. Beauty shops do excellent work below US rates.

Repairs of almost anything are relatively expensive, time consuming, and generally unsatisfactory. Spare parts, even from sales representatives, are a problem, and almost none are available for US cars.

Domestic Help

Full-time or part-time servants are found with little difficulty, but most require supervision and training, particularly in using household appliances such as washers, vacuum cleaners, and steam irons. Wages are lower than in the US. Gardeners are hard to find, since most

men who can do gardening prefer to work in the canefields during the cutting season at high wages. Single staff members find one maid is enough to cook, clean, wash, iron, and sometimes shop for groceries. Live-in maids and cooks are almost impossible to find, since they prefer to commute.

National insurance is required by law. Some employers furnish part of the servant's food and a uniform.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The Anglican Church is predominant, and many Anglican churches are found here. Roman Catholics represent 4% of the population, and there are five Catholic churches on the island. Protestant denominations include Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Moravian, Christian Science, Pilgrim Holiness, New Testament Church of God, Church of the Nazarene, Assembly of God, Baptist, the United Christian Brethern, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Barbados also has two Greek Orthodox churches and a Jewish synagogue.

EDUCATION

Dependent Education

The education curriculum is based on the English system. Preschool and grammar school education is good. There are three equally good private lower schools: St. Winifred's, St. Ursuline's (Catholic), and St. Gabriel's (Anglican). Due to an increase in the size of the foreign community and in Barbadian families who can afford to pay for private education, placement can be difficult.

Secondary education is offered by both government and private schools. In recent years, girls age 12 and above have attended St. Winifred's (private) and Queens College and Foundation School (both government), though room in the first form, age 12, is at a premium. For secondary level boys, placement in appropriate schools is extremely difficult, particularly near the beginning of the school year. Presentation College, a private Catholic school, and Foundation School, a government school, are the preferred choices. Harrison College and Lodge School, both government schools, are other options. If you have a boy aged 11 or above, contact the administrative officer as early as possible to ascertain availability of space in an appropriate school.

Beginning with the first form (first year of junior high) through the fifth form (last year of school), either Spanish or French is taught. Physics and chemistry are introduced in most schools in the third form. Schools in Barbados do not teach American history or literature. The school year starts in mid-September and ends in July, with long vacations at Easter and Christmas. All children wear school uniforms, which are available locally. Parents of school-aged children should write the administrative officer as soon as possible, giving names, ages, sex, and US grade of the children, and state school preference, if any.

Post Orientation Program

The Embassy periodically holds an orientation session for new employees. A Newcomer's Guide is available for incoming Embassy personnel. The Peace Corps conducts extensive orientation programs for its Volunteers, to which all Embassy personnel are invited.

Since English is the language most commonly spoken in Barbados and in the smaller islands within the Embassy's jurisdiction, you do not need to know a foreign language.

RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

Sports

Cricket is the national sport, and all Barbadians take an avid interest in it. The quality of cricket played locally is high, especially the test matches, and the West Indian team is one of the top test match teams in the world.

Soccer, rugby, golf, and tennis are popular, and basketball is becoming increasingly so. Embassy employees who are golfers have access to two 18-hole courses, neither of which is rated better than fair, but fees are relatively low. A 9-hole course is currently under construction. Tennis courts—clay, grass, and asphalt—are available in various parts of the island. Few, however, are public courts; most require club membership. There is one existing squash court, and another is under construction.

All beaches in Barbados are public and are easily accessible. Swimming, water-skiing, sailing, skindiving, snorkeling, scubadiving, wind surfing, and deep-sea fishing are popular sports. Since the water is warm year round, it is possible to participate in these sports at any time. However, variations in the surf make swimming at some places on the western and southern coasts more dangerous in some months than in others.

Swimming on much of the east coast is inadvisable (warning signs are posted along the coast). You can use the pools at some of the hotels gratis or by paying a small fee. Swimming areas generally do not have lifeguards.

Boating enthusiasts find that Barbados provides nearly ideal conditions. For a reasonable fee, the yachting clubs will dock a personally owned boat. Also, you can charter sailboats and powerboats at a moderate cost. Races among various classes of small boats are held throughout the year.

Thoroughbreds on the island are limited in number, but the Barbados Turf Club holds race meetings periodically throughout the year. Races normally take place at four separate periods, each time on four consecutive Saturdays. Polo matches are held during the winter season.

Barbados also offers opportunities for water polo, horseback riding, rifle shooting, table tennis, and netball.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Given the island's small size, touring opportunities are necessarily limited, but some places of historical significance or beauty are to be seen. Chief among these are Sam Lord's Castle, Farley Hill National Park, Welchman Hall Gully (a botanical park offering over 150 varieties of plants and shrubbery, including some wild monkeys), St. Michael's Cathedral, St. John's Church (the churchyard contains many interesting old tombs), and Bathsheba (an east coast resort).

Each of the smaller islands in the area has its own character and attractions. Brimstone Hill Fortress on St. Kitts and English Harbor (Nelson's Dockyard) on Antigua are of special in-

terest to history buffs. Also, quite easily accessible at reasonable cost are Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Martinique, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

Bridgetown is designated a rest and recuperation post, with Mexico City as the relief area.

Entertainment

Other than sporting events and parties, Barbados has relatively little to offer in entertainment. There is one drive-in and two air-conditioned indoor movie theaters, but the films are usually months old and tend to be of inferior quality. Amateur or semiprofessional theater and dance groups occasionally give public performances. Also, a semiprofessional orchestral group, the Barbados Symphonia, holds occasional concerts, and local and/or visiting artists may perform on special occasions. Band concerts are sometimes staged during the tourist season. Most of the larger hotels provide calypso and steel-band music throughout the year, and several nightclubs are available.

Barbados has numerous restaurants, large and small, which offer a variety of foods. Several serve food that is usually good, but none can be called a gourmet restaurant. Prices at best are comparable to those at better restaurants in Washington; often, the quality is not.

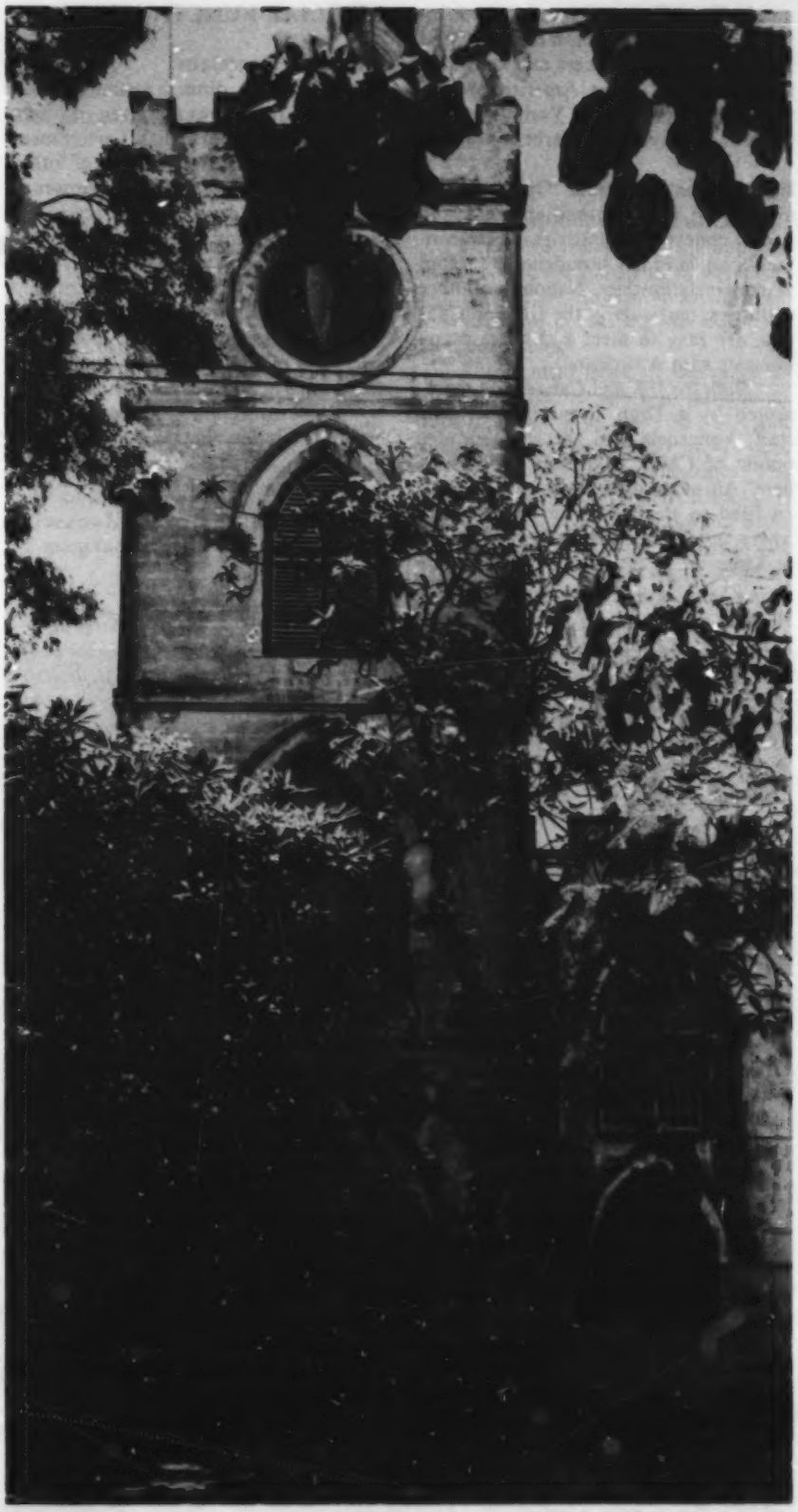
Amateur photographers and artists can find both scenic beauty and opportunities for human interest shots. You can purchase film locally, but art materials supply is limited. Local film processing does not meet US standards and is quite costly. Most photographers send their film to the US for developing.

Several active bridge clubs hold regular sessions, and there is also a chess club and a ham radio club.

Social Activities

Among Americans. A relatively small but active resident American community is composed of business representatives, retired families, and officials of the Embassy, USICA, USAID, NOAA, and the Peace Corps, and by numbers of winter residents during the December–April "season."

Women can join the American Wo-



St. John's Church, whose churchyard contains many interesting old tombs

men's Club. Embassy spouses meet informally once each month for lunch and a group activity. Officers and staff take an active part in the American Men's Luncheon Association. Various service clubs have branches in Barbados.

International Contacts. Opportunities abound to meet Barbadians officially and in community activities. These contacts can later be broadened to more personal relationships. Nationals of other countries, particularly the UK and Canada, are easy to meet and share many interests with Americans.

Both the UK and Canada are represented by a High Commissioner and staff; Venezuela and the People's Republic of China have small embassies here. All other diplomatic missions accredited to Barbados are located elsewhere, usually in Caracas, Port of Spain, or Kingston.

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS

Nature of Functions

Cocktail parties, dinners (usually buffet style), and receptions are given throughout the year by Barbadian Government officials, diplomatic officials of other countries, and private citizens. However, the summer is generally less active socially than during the rest of the year. The Ambassador and DCM are likely to be among the guests at Government House or the Prime Minister's official residence on special occasions, but lower ranking Embassy officers normally do not receive invitations to such functions.

Embassy section heads receive a representation allowance and are expected to entertain Barbadian and other foreign contacts from time to time.

Standards of Social Conduct

The standards of social conduct for employees assigned to Bridgetown are substantially the same as those for Embassy employees elsewhere in the Western world. Procedures at Bridgetown, however, are generally less formal than at many other Western capitals. Except for the Ambassador and DCM, Embassy officers will find little use for engraved calling cards. Locally printed cards will meet the needs of less senior officers. As is the case throughout the Foreign Service, Embassy employees are expected to attend official social functions hosted by the Ambassador whenever invited to do so, unless there is a good reason for their being absent.

The Carenage, which borders Trafalgar Square. Careening, the keeling of ships for cleaning and caulking, is still done today.

Notes For Travelers

GETTING TO THE POST

You can reach Bridgetown from Washington, DC by air via New York (American Airlines has daily nonstop flights from JFK during the tourist season and 3–4 flights per week during the off season), or via Miami and/or San Juan (Eastern Airlines has daily nonstop flights from Puerto Rico and 3 flights a week from Miami via St. Croix with no change in airplanes necessary). No US flag vessels provide regular service between the US and Barbados.

CUSTOMS, DUTIES, AND PASSAGE

Customs and Duties

The Embassy and Embassy personnel are granted free entry for items imported for their own use. One of Bridgetown's three large department stores has agreed to sell to Embassy personnel duty-free items with "Embassy certification of entitlement," but most stores will not, even though it is legal to do so. (They find that cumbersome government procedures make such transactions unattractive.)

Passage

You are not required to obtain visas before entering Barbados. The Embassy arranges to have diplomatic multientry permits stamped into your passport, as well as carnets. These are issued to staff members and to adult (over 18 years) family members after arrival. You will need at least eight 2" × 2-½" photographs for this purpose. As a rule, if you are coming from the US, you are not required to have vaccination certificates.

Pets

Barbados is rabies free, and the authorities are determined to keep it so. Some pure-bred animals can be purchased locally, but dogs and cats can be imported into Barbados only from the UK. If you want to import a dog or cat, you must first send the animal to the UK for 6 months' quarantine, and then apply for an import permit from the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture at least 30 days in advance of your anticipated arrival date. (The UK Ministry of Agriculture will supply a list of recommended quarantine kennels upon request.) If you want to import any other animal, you must obtain an import permit from the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture before shipping the animal.

FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

Pursuant to the provisions of FAMC 537, it has been determined that since there is no hunting in Barbados and only two gun clubs exist, you can import only .22 and .38 caliber pistols and revolvers, .22 caliber rifles, and 12- and 16-gage shotguns. Ammunition is limited to a maximum of 250 cartridges per weapon. However, you must obtain approval of the Chief of Mission and a license from the Government of Barbados before importing any firearms. The Embassy will assist you in obtaining the required license. Once the firearm has been imported, you must register and store it with the police and obtain a further license to have, use, or carry it.

CURRENCY, BANKING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The monetary unit in Barbados is the Barbados dollar (BDS$), comprising 100 cents. US$1 equals about BDS$2. Legal currency in the British Virgin Islands is the US dollar. The monetary unit in the remaining territories under the Embassy's jurisdiction is the East Caribbean dollar (EC$), comprising 100 cents. US$1 equals EC$2.70. Rates fluctuate, so check with the administrative officers. Embassy personnel may convert the US dollar freely into both Barbados and EC currencies. No restrictions are imposed on importing the US dollar or other foreign currencies, or, insofar as Embassy personnel are concerned, on exporting these currencies.

The Central Bank of Barbados issues Barbados currency in denominations of $100-, $20-, $10-, $5-, $2-, and $1-notes. Coins are issued in $1-, 25-, 10-, 5-, and 1-cent denominations. The East Caribbean Currency Authority issues EC notes in denominations of $100, $20, $5, and $1. Coins are minted to 50-, 25-, 10-, 5-, 2-, and 1-cent denominations.

The standard of weights and superficial measure is presently in a state of transition, since Barbados is in the process of converting to the metric system.

TAXES, EXCHANGE, AND SALE OF PROPERTY

Restrictions

You can sell your personal property, including vehicles, within 120 days prior to departure at a price not to exceed the original purchase price, plus any investment made in the item. You must request, through the administrative officers, permission to sell all items, imported or purchased duty free, which initially cost US$100 or more.

Facilities

Eight commercial banks, including the Chase Manhattan Bank and Citibank in Bridgetown, handle exchange and financial matters of Embassy personnel. While you may buy bank drafts in US dollars and other currencies, it is convenient to maintain a checking account in a US bank. Most employees prefer to allot their entire salaries to US checking accounts and draw on these for BDS dollar accounts here. You can buy American Express and other travelers checks, which are accepted by Barbados banks.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Guide to the Caribbean, Bahamas, and Bermuda. Eugene Fodor, editor. David McKay Co., Inc.: New York, 1966.

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West Indian Nations. P.M. Sherlock. Macmillan: London, 1973.

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The West Indies Federation. David Lowenthal, editor. American Geo. Society Research No. 23, Columbia University Press, 1960.

Who's Who of Barbadian Women. Jeannette Layne-Clarke, editor. Impact Productions Ltd.: Barbados, 1977.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

The following local holidays are observed in Barbados. The exact dates of religious holidays (starred) are based on the lunar calendar and change each year.

New Year's Day	January 1
Good Friday*	
Easter Bank Holiday*	
Labor Day	May 1
Whit Monday*	
Kadooment Day	First Monday in July
Caribbean Day	First Monday in August
United Nations Day	First Monday in October
Independence Day	November 30
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26

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